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Check out the Southwest Coordination Center (SWCC)  
website at <http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/> for products and  
services available through SWCC.

## **Welcome to the Southwest Area**

The Southwest Coordinating Group and Southwest Coordination Center welcomes you into our Geographic Area. The Southwest Coordination Center is located in Albuquerque, NM and functions under the Southwest Coordinating Group and the Southwest MAC Group when it is in session. The Southwest Coordination Center utilizes the same policies as established in the Southwest Mobilization Guide.

The Southwest Coordination Center (SWCC) is the focal point for internal and external requests for agencies within the geographic area consisting of Arizona, New Mexico, and federal lands west of the 100th meridian in Texas.

## **What to Expect While Assigned in the Southwest Area**

Most local units within the Southwest are very experienced in the utilization of Incident Management Teams. The briefings should have been thorough and provided valuable information regarding your assignment. This guide is intended to supplement local unit briefing packages and provide information about Geographic Area resources, protocols and procedures.

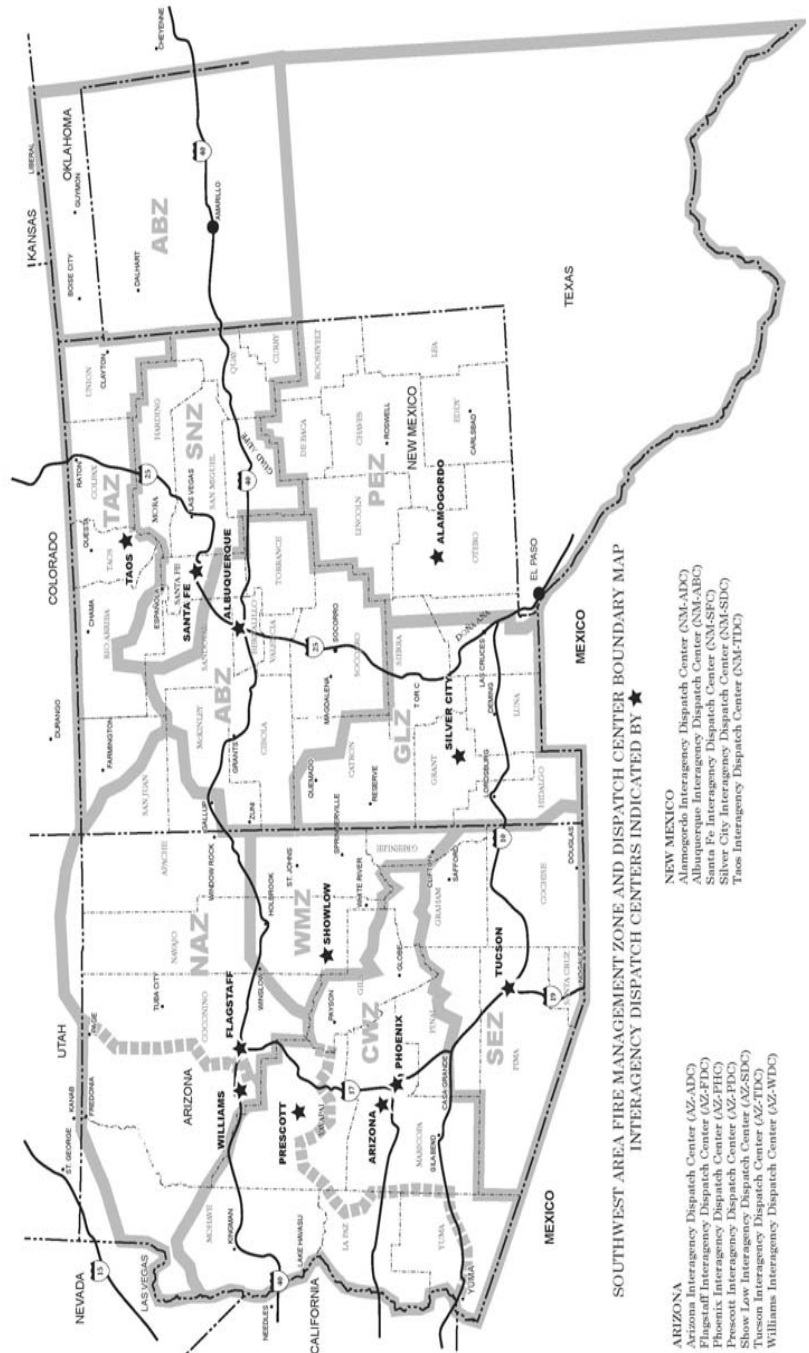
While assigned in the Southwest, please feel free to contact the Coordinator on Duty at SWCC with any questions or requests for assistance:

**800-440-4443**  
**505-842-3473**  
**505-842-3801 (fax)**

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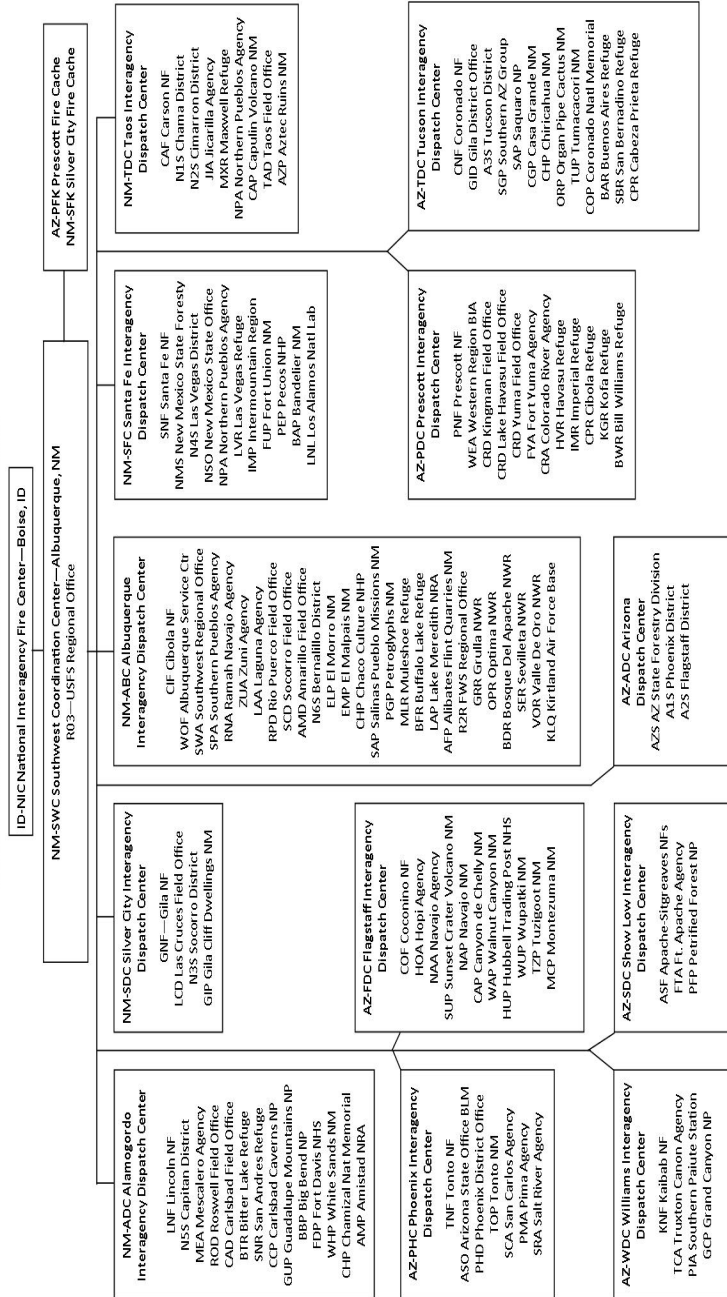
<b>Dispatch Center/Cache</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Fax</b>
Southwest Coordination Center (NM-SWC) Albuquerque Mobilization Center	(505) 842-3473 (505) 346-7904	(505) 842-3801 (505) 346-7908
<b>Arizona</b> Prescott Fire Cache (AZ-PFK)	(928) 777-5630	(928) 777-5608
Arizona Interagency Dispatch Center (AZ-ADC)	(800) 309-7081	(623) 445-0288
Flagstaff Interagency Dispatch Center (AZ-FDC)	(928) 526-0600	(928) 779-5267
Phoenix Interagency Dispatch Center (AZ-PHC) Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Mobilization Center	(480) 457-1555 (480) 457-1551	(480) 279-6595 (480) 279-3266
Prescott Interagency Dispatch Center (AZ-PDC)	(928) 777-5700	(928) 777-5609
Show Low Interagency Dispatch Center (AZ-SDC)	(928) 537-5305	(928) 537-5328
Tucson Interagency Dispatch Center (AZ-TDC)	(520) 202-2710	(520) 807-7065
Williams Interagency Dispatch Center (AZ-WDC)	(928) 635-2601	(928) 635-2728
<b>New Mexico</b> Silver City Fire Cache (NM-SFK)	(575) 538-5611	(575) 388-5672
Alamogordo Interagency Dispatch Center (NM-ADC)	(575) 437-2286	(575) 437-7908
Albuquerque Interagency Dispatch Center (NM-ABC)	(505) 346-2660	(505) 346-3911
Santa Fe Interagency Dispatch Center (NM-SFC)	(505) 438-5600	(505) 424-8457
Silver City Interagency Dispatch Center (NM-SDC)	(575) 538-5371	(575) 388-8359
Taos Interagency Dispatch Center (NM-TDC)	(575) 758-6208	(575) 758-6207

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Exhibit I - Southwest Area Logistical Chart (Dispatch Channels)



### **Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group Activations**

During times of high activity when multiple large incidents and resource competition are occurring, the SWCC Center Manager will meet with the Southwest Coordinating Group to determine whether to activate the Geographic MAC Group. Typically this will only occur during the higher Preparedness Levels (3-5). The MAC Group function is to assess the fire situation from an interagency perspective and make resource allocation decisions based on the latest intelligence and information from the Incident Commanders. The SWCC is responsible for implementing these decisions and the SWCC staff will be briefed by the Center Manager or COD after MAC decisions are made.

Typically the MAC Group daily schedule is as follows (when activated):

1300-1500 – MAC Group Support and the SWCC Center Manager gathers information and intelligence on the fire and resource situation in preparation for the meeting.

1500-1600 – Conference call with Incident Commanders on Southwest incidents to have dialog regarding their fire situation and any critical needs they may have.

1600-1700 – MAC Group prioritizes the needs of incidents based on specific threats to life and property, cultural and historical values, and threats to infrastructure.

1700 – SWCC staff is briefed and actions are implemented (resource allocation, reallocation, etc.)

### **MAC Group Conference Call**

Incident Commanders will be notified by SWCC when the MAC Group is activated (usually in high Preparedness Levels 3, 4, and 5). Once the MAC Group is in session, daily conference calls occur at 1500mdt. Contact SWCC for the conference bridge number. The IC reporting form can found on page 6 of this document.

**SW MAC Group Call  
Incident Commander Reporting Format**

**Date:**                      **Name of Incident:**

***IC Update***

- Fire Intelligence
  - ⇒ Size
  - ⇒ General area
  - ⇒ Jurisdiction
  - ⇒ Containment %
  - ⇒ Estimated Containment Date
- Values at Risk (time frames & distances)
  - ⇒ Communities
  - ⇒ Structures
  - ⇒ Infrastructure
  - ⇒ Historic, Cultural, Natural Resources
- Incident strategies being implemented, and/or unusual significant tactics
- Issues or problem areas
- Major Accomplishments
- Update on Plans (evacuation, rehab, demob)
- Accident/Injury/Illness summary (How long would it take to get a critically injured FF on an isolated area in the fire to a medical facility?) – Not an everyday report; just startup consideration and when new areas get involved.
- Planned Community Meetings
- Socio-political Issues?
- Critical Needs with justification, and length of time needed

## **Southwest Area Air Tanker Policy**

Air tankers in the Southwest are never considered “committed.” They are always available to be diverted to higher priority fires either within the Southwest or nationally whenever operating in our Geographic Area. Airtankers are required to be released every night and do not stay “assigned” to an incident. If an incident needs an airtanker the following day, requests are placed at the time of need, and not the night before. This is due to the everchanging needs and priorities for new initial attack and existing incidents. This policy applies to Type 1 and 2 airtankers only. If an IMT would like to stagger air tanker start times it must be coordinated with the SWCC Aircraft Coordinator. If air tankers are brought on early, it is important to also coordinate with the local dispatch aircraft desk and ensure that the retardant crews/air tanker base personnel are aware of the request.

## **Name Requests**

The SWCC will generally process name requests for agency personnel within the geographic area; however, name requests for AD’s may be denied if there are agency personnel available with like qualifications. The National Mobilization Guide (Ch. 20) outlines the following for name requests outside the geographic area: “Name requests for suppression or all-hazard incidents should be rare and are appropriate only for highly specialized positions, priority trainees, or to meet specific agency objectives (for example, name requests between state agencies). The ordering unit must confirm availability for the individual being requested prior to placing the request.”



## **Demobilization Policy**

Due to the rapid nature of some fires in the Southwest, it is critical that demobilization be coordinated with the local unit and the SWCC. Resources should not be released until it has been determined whether or not they are available for reassignment or have an order for a reassignment. It is our intent to not “hold” resources at ICP, but to receive enough notice from the incident so as to provide ample opportunities for reassignments.

## **NWCG Minimum Standards for Medical Units**

The Interim NWCG *Minimum Standards for Medical Units* is designed to be utilized as a baseline or minimum expectations for EMS personnel and services associated with Federal wildland fire incidents. The document can be found here:

**<http://www.nwcg.gov/branches/pre/rmc/iems/policy-guides.html>**

### **SOUTHWEST PREDICTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM**

Interagency Fire Weather Meteorologists at SWCC combine forecast information from the National Weather Service (NWS) and other sources into area-wide weather summaries and briefings. These meteorologists also work in conjunction with Fuels Specialists and our Intelligence Section to produce integrated fire weather/fire potential assessments covering 7-day, monthly and seasonal outlooks for the entire Southwest. The Intelligence Section of the Predictive Services Unit collects, analyzes, and disseminates specific situation, resource, and fire danger information. In addition, they maintain accurate current and historical data for all agencies, oversee FAMWEB and FTP.NIFC.GOV applications, and manage the SWCC website. All products and services of the Predictive Services Unit are available on-line at the SWCC web site at <http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/>

#### **Predictive Services Mission Statement:**

“To provide weather, fuels and intelligence products that support the decision-making process of local, state, geographic area and national organizations whose job it is to efficiently allocate resources to existing and anticipated suppression, fire use and prescribed fire operations.”

Any questions concerning SWCC Predictive Services, contact Chuck Maxwell, Program Manager, phone: 505-842-3419, Email: [cmaxwell@fs.fed.us](mailto:cmaxwell@fs.fed.us).

#### **2014 SWCC Predictive Services**

Chuck Maxwell (meteorologist) Group Leader, (505) 842-3419

Rich Naden (meteorologist) RAWS Coordinator, (505) 842-3415

Jay Ellington Intelligence Operations Coordinator, (505) 842-3874

### **PREDICTIVE SERVICES PRODUCTS:**

**GACC 7-Day Significant Fire Potential:** The 7-Day Significant Fire Potential product contains projected fire weather, fuel dryness, fire danger, fire potential, and resource status information. Posted daily, by 1000 MDT, to the GACC website during significant wildland fire potential and/or fire activity.

**Monthly and Seasonal Fire Potential Outlooks:** These are longer-term predictions of fire business potential, used for strategic planning, and seasonal budgeting.

**Besides providing these products,** SWCC meteorologists provide daily briefings to the Southwest Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC), the Southwest Center Managers and others upon request. We also try to routinely monitor all sources of fire weather and resource information to ensure consistency, quality and applicability. Requests for specific, operationally-oriented weather information, such as Spot Weather Forecasts are referred to the local NWS office.

### **INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS PRODUCTS:**

The Intelligence Operations Section produces a number of products ranging from the SWCC Morning Intelligence Briefing to Area-wide ERC Charts. The two products which will affect all incoming IMT's will be the Incident Status Summary (ICS-209) and FTP.NIFC.GOV.

When a Type 1 or 2 IMT is assigned to an incident within a dispatch area and the IMT has sufficient computer communication capability on an incident, the dispatch center can turn over "data entry" rights to the IMT in order for the IMT to complete the ICS-209. However, until the IMT is in place, the dispatch center is responsible for initiating and updating the ICS-209 until the IMT has assumed command and has the capability of entering the ICS-209. During the incident, the dispatch center is responsible for monitoring submission of the ICS-209 and entering acreage updates into the SIT Report program. Upon departure of the IMT,

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the “data entry” responsibility returns to the dispatch center for submission.

In most situations, the Situation Unit Leader (SITL) is the contact individual for maintaining the ICS-209 for the IMT. Soon after assignment, the SITL should contact the SWCC Intelligence Operations Section to insure their FAMWEB ID is set up to access the 209 Program specific to the dispatch center area where the incident is located. If the IMT has been given “data entry” rights for ICS-209 entry, then an ICS-209 is required for each day while on the assignment.

### **Reporting Requirement for Incidents Reported Under the Following Strategies**

#### **Full Suppression**

An ICS-209 shall be initiated for **ALL** wildland fires deemed Full Suppression that burns through 100 or more acres, where timber and slash is the primary fuel type (Fuel Models 8-13), or 300 or more acres, where grass or brush is the primary fuel type (Fuel Models 1-7), or whenever a Type 1 or 2 Incident Management Team is assigned. **For a flowchart of “When to Report Wildland Fire Incidents with an ICS-209,” see appendix 16.**

Once an ICS-209 has been initiated under this strategy, an ICS-209 will be **submitted daily no later than 2100 (local time)** until the incident has been declared contained, unless smoke intensity is considered moderate or above, which will require continued ICS-209 updates of the incident until intensity is low. For significant re-ignitions after containment, updates are required daily until the incident is declared controlled.

If a wildland fire meets the submission requirements above, but is contained within one operational period, a “Final” ICS-209 can be submitted in lieu of an “Initial and Final” 209.

If a Type 1 or 2 IMT is assigned and remains assigned past the containment date, an ICS-209 will continue to be submitted until the IMT transfers command.

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There may be times at the direction of the SWCC or Southwest MAC Group to submit two ICS-209s each day due to significant changes occurring at the incident or within the geographic area.

#### **Confine, Monitor, Point Zone Protection, or a Strategy Other Than Full Suppression**

An ICS-209 shall be initiated for **ALL** wildland fires deemed Confine, Monitor, Point Protection, or has a strategy other than Full Suppression, where the fire will remain active beyond 72 hours since the initial report of the incident.

Under any of these strategies, once an ICS-209 has been initiated, follow-up ICS-209s will be submitted each Thursday **no later than 2100 (local time)** until the incident has been declared out. Additional updates are required should any significant change events occur or are anticipated, such as: (1) an unexpected increase in acreage or activity (i.e. smoke production); (2) damage to values at risk (i.e. structures, infrastructure, etc.); (3) a significant accident, injury, or fatality occurs; or (4) a forecasted critical weather event (i.e. high Haines, dry cold front, etc.) that may impact a or b above. An incident managed under multiple strategies with a Type 1 or 2 IMT assigned will submit an ICS-209 daily until containment is achieved or the IMT is released. An incident managed under multiple strategies with a commitment of national resources (i.e. T1 crews, air tankers, T1 helicopters, etc.) beyond the 72-hour window will submit an ICS-209 daily until the resources have been released, at which time the incident can be finalized or updated on Thursdays.

A complex of fires managed under multiple strategies should submit an ICS-209 report daily until containment is achieved for all fires with the complex. Once the complex is dissolved, ICS-209 report for individual fires should be submitted based on the above criteria.

For incidents with resource benefit as an incident objective, insert in the Remarks block “ \_\_\_\_\_ % of this incident is being managed for resource benefit.”

#### **Non-Wildland Fire Incidents**

An ICS-209 is required daily for ALL non-wildland fire incidents such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc., where significant national fire resources and/or a Type 1 or Type 2 IMT are assigned.

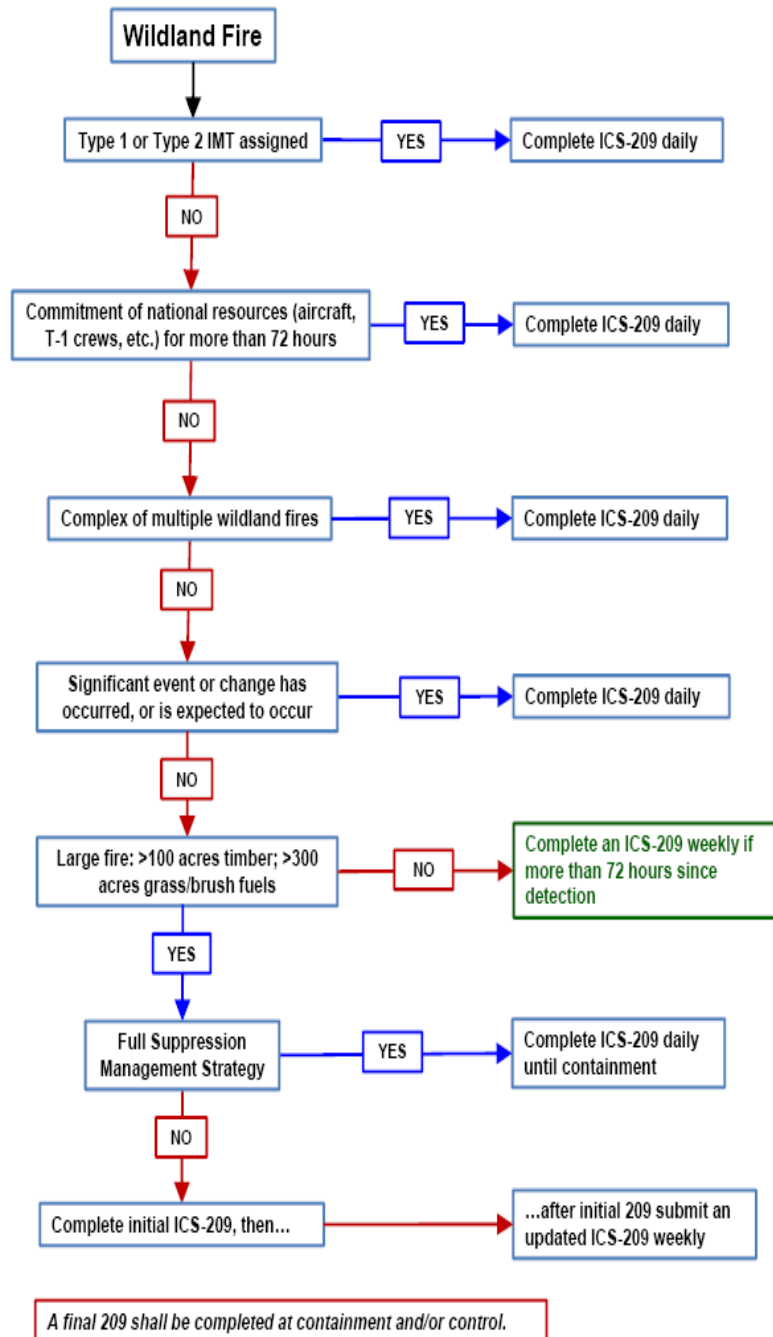
**Additional Program Information:**

A "Final" ICS-209 must be submitted for all fires initiated in the 209 Program by the responsible unit or dispatch center, no matter the strategy.

The ICS-209 form is available in MS Word (.doc) format for download. The downloadable form can be found via the opening page of the SIT - 209 Program.

If you have questions related to the SIT – 209 Program, it is suggested that you refer to the SIT – 209 Online User Guide at [http://gacc.nifc.gov/predictive\\_services/intelligence/niop/programs/sit\\_209/Help/index.htm](http://gacc.nifc.gov/predictive_services/intelligence/niop/programs/sit_209/Help/index.htm) . Should you have additional questions, contact the SWCC Intelligence Operations Section.

## When to Report Wildland Fire Incidents with an ICS-209



## Smoke Management Notification and Reporting in New Mexico

The SMP (Smoke Management Program) applies to all lands in New Mexico EXCEPT for Bernalillo County and tribal lands. These are outside the Environment Department's jurisdiction. The regulation and guidance documents are on the NM Air Quality Bureau's Web site: <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/SMP/SmokeManagementGuidance.htm>

For the purposes of the New Mexico Smoke Management Program (20.2.65 New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) – Smoke Management):

For wildfires that are **managed fully under suppression**, a final fire activity tracking form is required as detailed in **20.2.65.105 NMAC**.

**For all unplanned wildfire events that are managed in any part for multiple objectives** and are not managed fully (100 percent) for suppression, shall be registered with the New Mexico Air Quality Bureau as wildland fire use under SMP II Forests Registration. All applicable requirements for wildland fire use as stated in the regulation, shall apply to such fires. This includes the daily notification to the Air Quality Bureau by 10:00 a.m. of the status of the burn. This can be accomplished in one of three ways:

Any burner may use the SMP Notification form.

Any burner may submit a Wildland Fire Use form, which will be available on the NM Air Quality Bureau Web site.

Federal land managers may use Form ICS-209

(NOTE: Units that plan to use Form ICS-209 for reporting these fires to the NM AQB must understand that an ICS-209 will require daily submission from the start date through the date the fire is declared OUT. This is different from the current Federal Reporting Requirements for the ICS-209, which states initial reporting after 72 hours and updated submissions each subsequent Thursday.)



## **Smoke Management Notification and Reporting in Arizona**

For the purposes of the Arizona Smoke Management Program, there is no daily or weekly notification requirement for wildland fires to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.

**Smoke Reporting on the ICS-209.** On December 22, 2008, the Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) deemed it a requirement for the following information to be included in the text portion of Block 28 of the ICS-209 (NOTE: Starting with 2010, this requirement is for Arizona incidents only):

A breakdown of the fire by fuel model (i.e. FBFM 1-13).

Total fuel load in tons per acre for each fuel model.

The intensity at which the fire is burning in each fuel model (i.e. low, moderate, high).

## **National FTP.NIFC.GOV**

FTP.NIFC.GOV, specifically [ftp://ftp.nifc.gov/Incident\\_Specific\\_Data/SOUTHWEST/](ftp://ftp.nifc.gov/Incident_Specific_Data/SOUTHWEST/), is the official site for Southwest Area interagency wildland fire incident data and documents. This single site provides a “One Stop Shopping” location for incident personnel to download data when it is available and to upload incident relevant data (such as remotely sensed images and incident GIS data), as well as share incident information with interagency Web sites such as ACTIVEFIRES ([www.activefires.net](http://www.activefires.net)) and GEOMAC ([www.geomac.gov](http://www.geomac.gov)). The site is hosted at the USDA National Information and Technology Center (NITC) in Kansas City, Missouri.

The Southwest Area FTP.NIFC.GOV site has three folders established for use: (1) Incidents, (2) GACC Support, and (3) Other Support.

**Incidents:** Location for specific incident data (i.e fire perimeter maps, GIS layers, etc.). This folder is viewable by the public, but requires a user name and password (see below) for uploading data.

**GACC Support:** Location for files that may hold sensitive data (i.e. IAPs, phone numbers, aviation assets, frequencies, Infrared, etc.). A user name and password (see below) for viewing and uploading data.

**Other Support:** Location for temporary files. Contact the SWCC Intelligence Operations Coordinator for use of this folder. This folder is viewable by the public, but requires a user name and password (see below) for uploading data.

Quick access to the Southwest Area folders can be found via the SWCC Web site, “Intelligence Operations” page. Click on link “Southwest Incident Specific & GACC Support Folders.”

- A. Information posted to the site can be public or private (password protected). Information that is non-sensitive or unclassified may be posted to the public folders. Information that is sensitive or classified must be posted to the protected folder. Each Geographic Coordination Center has a protected folder established. All incident action plans (IAPs), licensed software, and/or copyrighted material must be uploaded to this folder.
- B. **Access to the Southwest portion of the FTP.NIFC.GOV** can be found via the SWCC web site, “Intelligence Operations” page. Click on link “Southwest Incident Specific & GACC Support Folders.”
- C. To obtain the User ID and Password for the folders, contact the SWCC Intelligence Operations Section at 505.842.3427.

#### **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (IMT) MOBILIZATION**

When a Type 1 or 2 IMT is committed to an incident within the Southwest Area, the following items need to be FAX'd or emailed to SWCC as soon as feasibly available:

1. Delegation of Authority to Incident Commander
2. Incident Objective Sheet from the IAP
3. Phone numbers established for the team and ICP
4. Map to Incident Command Post (ICP)
5. Map of initial perimeter and subsequent updates
6. List of phone numbers for expanded dispatch
7. Wildland Fire Decision Support (WFDSS) documents and any subsequent updates

## **Type 2 Crew Ordering/Usage**

**Southwest Firefighter (SWFF)** — Administering guidelines for Southwest Fire Fighter (SWFF) crews are found in the SWFF Crew Management Guidelines. The “**SWFF Crew Management Guidelines**” charge home/sponsoring units with the administration and identification of a list of equipment required for all Type 2/SWFF and Camp Crew members when they are dispatched to an incident. The host agency is responsible for outfitting the crews including tools. These crews are not self-sufficient and require logistical support when mobilizing out of the GACC.

While a number of SWFF crews are available, a specific number of crews are designated from each SWFF organization for dispatch to incidents outside of the Southwest Area. This number of crews listed for each unit should not be exceeded until all organizations have reached their assigned maximum level or have stated they cannot reach that level and all available interagency regular and hotshot crews have been committed.

**Arizona State Department of Corrections (DOC) and New Mexico Inmate Work Crews (IWC)** — Administering guidelines for DOC crews are found in the Arizona and New Mexico State Forestry Department of Correction Crew Management Guidelines. Contact State Forestry for a copy.

DOC Type 2 crews are available throughout the states of Arizona and New Mexico. All requests for Arizona DOC crews must go through the Arizona Interagency Dispatch Center. Requests for the New Mexico Inmate Worker Crew (IWC) will be placed with the Albuquerque Interagency Dispatch Center.

DOC crews cannot be dispatched outside of their home state. These crews come fully equipped with transportation and tools. All crews are certified up to NWCG standards and are accompanied by a Corrections Crew Boss. These crews do not participate in the crew dispatch rotation. The crews abide by the length of assignment and work/rest guideline.

**Camp Crews** — Camp crews will be dispatched with a standard configuration of 1 crew supervisor and 9 crew members, unless a different configuration is ordered by the incident. Any deviation from the standard will be identified in the special needs block on the request. A moderate fitness level rating is the minimum for each person on the crew. Reference SWFF Guidelines.

## SOUTHWEST GEOGRAPHIC AREA

### Safety Alert

Date: March 2014  
Subject: US- Mexico Border Fire Operations Safety  
Area of Concern: Firefighter and Public Safety  
Distribution: Southwest Geographic Area

#### The US-Mexico Border Safety Concerns:

Border violence continues to create Health and Safety concerns for employees and the public in areas adjacent to the US- Mexico border stemming from two types of illegal activities on or near the border between Brownsville, TX, and San Diego, CA: drug smuggling and illegal immigration. Each of these illegal activities poses specific safety and health threat to personnel working on or near the border. Also, Bandits along the border sometimes try to intercept illegal immigrants and drug shipments with the intent of robbing them. These people are usually armed and may resort to violence.

#### Drug Smuggling:

Drug smuggling includes a variety of activities related to the transport and distribution of drugs across the Mexican border into the United States. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency has deemed this area a high intensity drug trafficking area (HIDTA). Drug smugglers are moving large quantities of drugs across Federal lands and they also are using recreation sites to stage the distribution of drugs to other parts of the United States. Drug smugglers should always be considered potentially violent.

#### Illegal Immigration:

Activities associated with illegal immigration fall into two categories: the operations of those trafficking in illegal immigrants, or "coyotes;" and the activities of the illegal immigrants themselves as they are being transported, or are transporting themselves, across the Mexican border into the United States. Coyotes tend to blend into the group of illegal immigrants to avoid detection. These coyotes are engaged in illegal activities, could be armed, and don't want to be caught. An encounter with these individuals poses a threat to personal safety. Most illegal immigrants simply want to be left alone and will normally attempt to avoid all contact. Extreme caution should always be practiced when encountering any individuals along or near the border. Even though there have been no reported cases of physical harm to field employees, there have been cases of serious injury and deaths of law enforcement officers.

#### Problems Fighting Wildland Fires:

All personnel responding to fires along the US- Mexico border need to be aware of issues related to illegal activities on or near the border and have an understanding of the unique problems they could potentially face. It is imperative that agency offices along the border provide IMT's and incoming resources a very thorough briefing on current border issues and protocols. The possibility exists that firefighters will encounter illegal immigrants or drug smugglers along the border areas. If firefighters encounter immigrants or smugglers, they must remain vigilant to the tasks at hand while keeping themselves and their crews safe. It is important that initial attack resources, incident commanders, and Incident Management Teams responding to the border region set up coordinated efforts with local law enforcement (e.g., Border Patrol) in preparation for illegal activities. The following are potential situations firefighters could encounter:

1. Illegal immigrant and smugglers warming, cooking, signal, and diversion fires have started wildland fires.
2. Illegal activity along the border has involved "copycat vehicles" painted to look like agency vehicles.
3. Radios and phones don't work in many locations on the border.
4. When cell phones do work, a call placed to law enforcement might connect to an operator in Mexico.
5. Conflicts in air space with helicopters assigned to the fire and helicopters used for law enforcement.
6. Undocumented aliens are hiding or camping within or adjacent to the incident operations.
6. Potential health risks associated with large amounts of trash or caches of drugs burning.
7. Arson fires being started to divert attention from illegal activities happening nearby.

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- 8. High speed vehicle traffic from fleeing vehicles or pursuits.
- 9. Packs and equipment being stolen.

### **Border Safety Information:**

The Southwest Area Agencies have developed protocols and training materials to help increase the safety awareness for firefighters working along the border. Links to these and additional information are on the SWCC website under Safety Management.

- └ *International Border Watchouts / Border Risk Areas*, pocket card.
  - └ *Border Fire Response Protocols* by Dispatch Center.
  - └ *Borderland Safeguards*, pamphlet AZ BLM.
  - └ *Interagency Aviation Information bulletin IA 2011-02, Aviation Operations Within Mutual Aid Zone USA/Mexico*
  - └ *Working Along the United States-Mexico Border*, MTDC Safety Training DVD# 0823 2D11.
- The DVD has three-modules. Modules one and two are designed for anyone who works near the border. Module three is specifically for firefighters. Also YouTube Weblinks for these Modules are listed.



## Interagency Aviation Information Bulletin



No. IA 2011-02

May 27, 2011

Page 1 of 2

**Subject:** Aviation Operations Within Mutual Aid Zone USA/Mexico  
**Area of Concern:** Air Operations along the USA/Mexico Border  
**Distribution:** Aviation Operations

**Discussion:** Agreements between the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture of the United States of America and the United Mexican States (CONAFOR) establish guidance and protocols for aerial firefighting operations along the border. These agreements enable firefighting resources of one country to cross the United States-Mexico border to suppress wildfire.

The firefighting response area is termed the "zone of mutual assistance" and is measured from the border up to 10 miles (16 KM) inside of each country.

Any aircraft planning to enter Mexico's airspace must satisfy various requirements established within the agreement by the appropriate Interagency Dispatch Center. Aircraft are **NOT** permitted to enter Mexico's airspace without the permission from the Dispatch Center and concurrence of aerial supervision.

### Considerations for the use of aircraft are:

- Permission must be received from CONAFOR prior to airspace entry.
- Suppression aircraft may include restricted category aircraft.
- Airtankers will operate under the supervision of a qualified Leadplane/Aerial Supervision Module and/or Air Tactical Group Supervisor. This is not considered an initial attack activity.
- All aircraft operations will be conducted under appropriate Forest Service, DOI Aviation Management Directorate (AMD), or agency contract regulations.
- Airtankers identified by U.S. Forest Service Fire and Aviation and approved by CONAFOR will be allowed to support fires within the Zone of Mutual Assistance. This includes all the airtankers identified in the Schedule of Items.
- All U.S. contract or agency aircraft will operate from facilities within the United States. Landings outside the United States (with the exception of emergencies and logistical operations involving U.S. Sending Agency personnel) **are not authorized** within the Zone of Mutual Assistance.
- All aircraft will follow normal U.S. Customs re-entry procedures. The Pilot in Command is responsible for ensuring these requirements are met.
- Aircraft investigation procedures will be coordinated with the appropriate Mexican agencies involved at the time of the incident/accident.



**References:**

2011 National Interagency Mobilization Guide, Chapter 40 Cooperation, Amendment to the Wild-fire Protection Agreement Between the Department of Interior and the Department of Agriculture of the United States of America and the Secretariat of Environment, Natural Resources, and Fisheries of the United Mexican States for the Common Border, page 55 – 65.

2011 Southwest Area Mobilization Guide, Chapter 40 Cooperation, International Agreement with Mexico, page 40-1

2011 Emergency Mutual Assistance Operating Plan Between Southeast Arizona Zone, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Interior, and Mexican National Forest Commission (CONAFOR)



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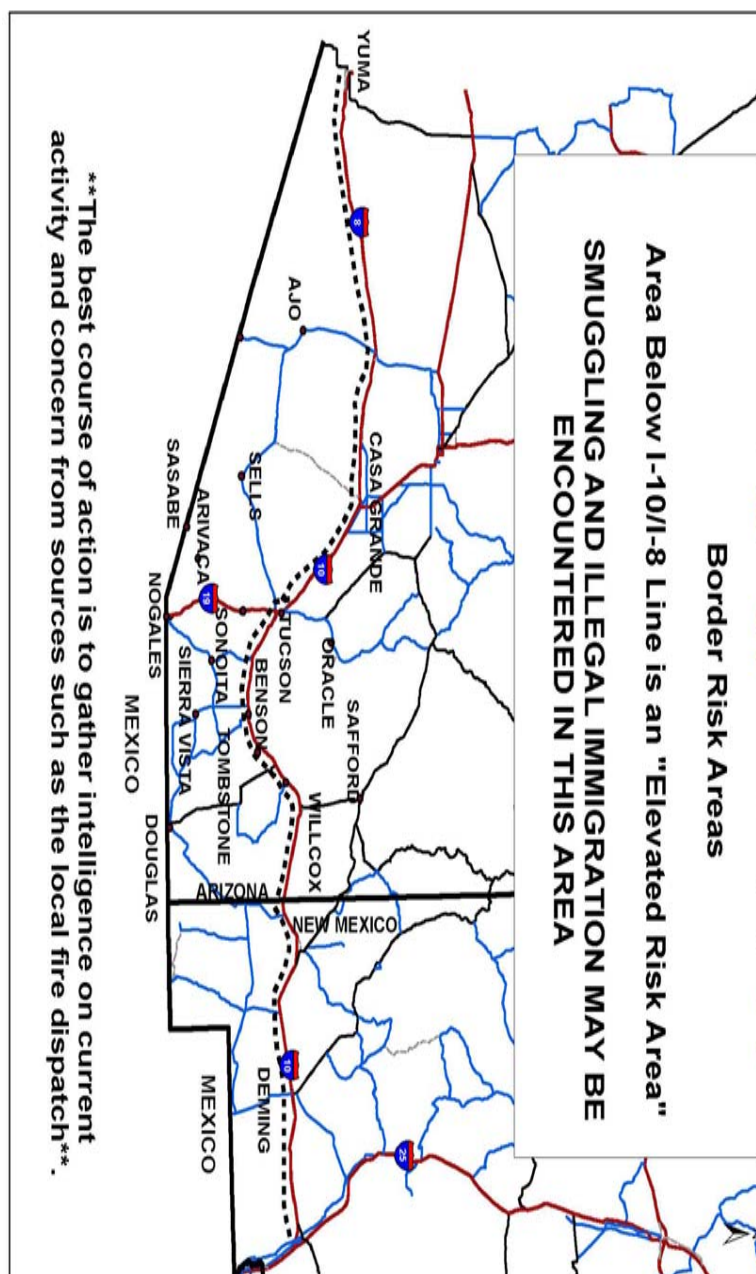
*/s/ Keith C. Raley***Keith C. Raley****Chief, Aviation Safety and  
Program Evaluation**

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*/s/ Ron Hanks***Ron Hanks****Chief, Aviation Safety  
Management Systems**

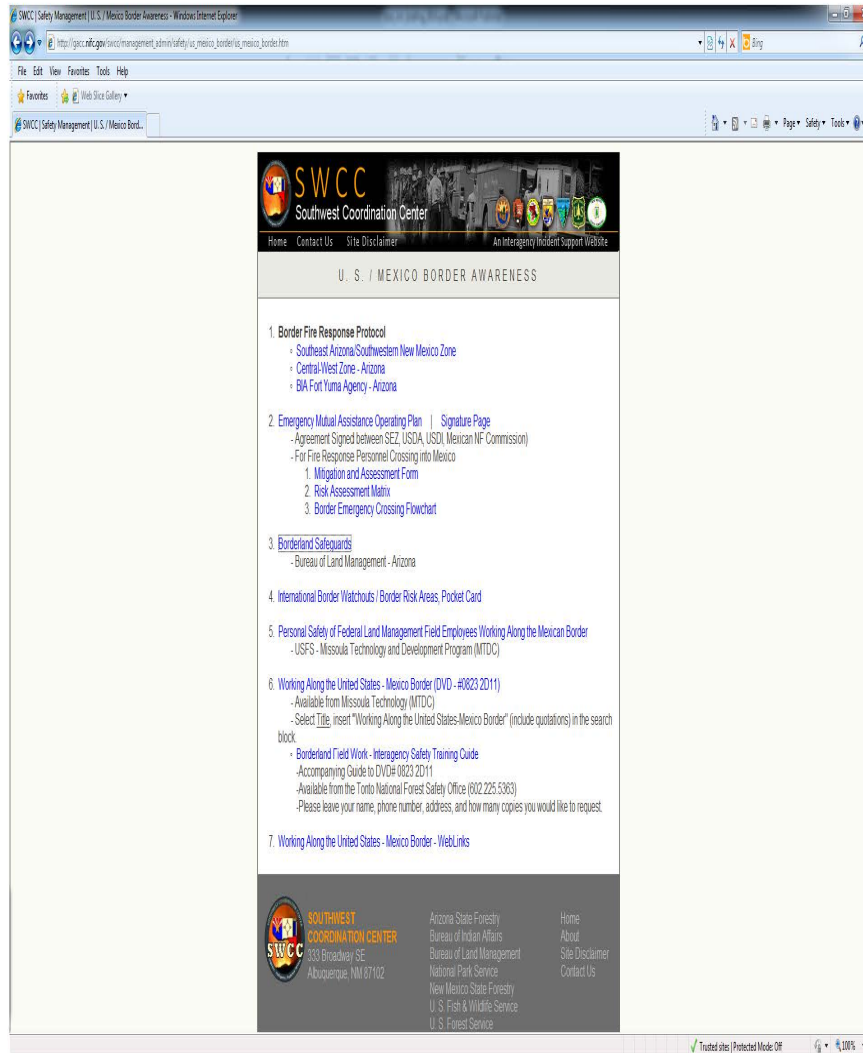
## **International Border Watchouts!**

1. Expect high speed driving and law enforcement pursuits
2. Expect drivers to be distracted
3. All aircraft operations have increased collision risk
4. Radio frequency interference from Mexico likely
5. Radio/cell phone dead spots increase employee risks
6. Cell phone connections to Mexico likely
7. Language barriers increase risk
8. Threats to employees are present 24/7/365
9. You are not clearly identified as an agency employee
10. Every visitor contact has potential risk
11. Higher occurrence of unexpected visitor encounters
12. Traditional responses may not be appropriate, check your guy
13. Responding to situations inconsistent with assigned authority and training
14. Night operations require special considerations
15. Unattended vehicles will be damaged or stolen
16. Illegal uses in remote areas likely
17. Heightened risk of biological contamination
18. Always know your location and be able to describe it.
19. Let others know your expected route and destination (check-in/check-out)



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A wealth of valuable information can be found on the SWCC Website > Safety > US/Mexico Border Awareness. More in depth protocols, Operating Plans, Safeguards, and other links are available.



## **Oil and Gas Safety**

**TOPIC:** Potential employee hazards associated with the growing Oil and Gas (O&G) Wildland Fire Industrial Interface

**PURPOSE OF BRIEFING DOCUMENT:** Outline roles, responsibilities, and training resources

**BACKGROUND:** O & G development throughout the West presents potential hazards associated with wildland fire management operations. Potential hazards may include:

- Increased traffic associated with energy operations
- Open pits, tanks, small buildings
- Pipelines, including plastic surface lines
- Flammable venting associated oil and gas facilities
- Hydrogen Sulfide gas (H<sub>2</sub>S)

Tank batteries (oil storage tanks)

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** Like the increasing Wildland Urban Interface, O&G development has expanded to locations where it had not existed in the past. It is the responsibility of District, Field, Area, and Fire Managers in oil and gas industrial interface areas to develop operating procedures and provide training for all applicable wildland fire personnel. As part of a standard briefing package, incoming agency and non-agency wildland fire personnel from outside the area must receive O & G hazard information and operating procedures.

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**The following websites provide additional information and training resources:**

2014 Red Book Guidance (Chapter 07-21) Wildland Fires In or Near Oil/Gas Operations

[http://www.nifc.gov/policies/pol\\_ref\\_redbook.html](http://www.nifc.gov/policies/pol_ref_redbook.html)

A template for briefing Incident Management Teams is available in the “Additional Resources” section of the NIFC Safety website at [www.nifc.gov](http://www.nifc.gov) Oil & Gas Field Safety Guidelines for Incident Management Teams

Six Minutes for Safety at Wildfire Lessons Learned website: <http://iirdb.wildfirelessons.net/main/Reviews.aspx>

Hydrogen Sulfide Gas (H<sub>2</sub>S)  
Oil & Gas Field Risk Assessment  
Wildfires in/near Oil and Gas Fields

### **Oil Field Safety and SOPS**

There are many hazards associated with working and fighting wildland fires in the oil and gas fields.

Hazards include:

Hydrogen Sulfide gas (H<sub>2</sub>S)  
above ground flow and gas lines  
oil field truck traffic  
tank batteries (oil storage tanks)  
heavy equipment  
hazardous materials

As part of your in-briefing you will be required to participate in a H<sub>2</sub>S presentation. Detailed engines will be assigned a gas monitor that can be used in areas of suspected H<sub>2</sub>S.

Standard protocols when responding to wildland fires in the oil and gas fields:

1. Never use active or abandoned well sites as staging areas.
2. Request a resource advisor through Dispatch.
3. In the event you respond without local I.A. resources, be very thorough in sizing up the fire prior to engaging. In the event a resource advisor is not on scene take advantage of

the oilfield workers' knowledge who will likely be in the area.

4. Use common sense—If you don't like what you see, don't engage.
5. There are many roads within the oil fields that the fire can be contained on. Use appropriate suppression tactics to minimize firefighter exposure.
6. Do not pick up the plastic flow lines as they can appear to be cool but may burn you seriously if melted (may not appear to be melted).
7. Stay upwind of any burning materials such as waste oil, tank batteries, equipment, etc.
8. Note the location of wind socks on structures—may be an indicator of H<sub>2</sub>S.

**DO's and DON'Ts concerning Fire Operations in oil and gas areas to avoid exposure to H<sub>2</sub>S Gas:**

**DOs:**

- If you are responding to known oil and gas pad areas, DO contact local petroleum engineer or resource advisor.
- If your unit has known oil and gas operations, DO ensure that every firefighter is provided with training on H<sub>2</sub>S.
- If you happen upon a remote oil and gas pad area, DO cordon off the area with flagging and deny entry and DO modify suppression tactics to avoid the area.
- DO avoid low lying drainage, ravines, and gullies near oil and gas pads as they tend to accumulate higher air concentrations of potentially toxic gases, especially during early morning hours when air has the tendency to sink.
- If you suspect that someone has been exposed to H<sub>2</sub>S, DO seek medical care immediately at the nearest hospital.

**DON'Ts:**

- DON'T locate fire camps, ICPs, or helispots on or near oil and gas pads.
- DON'T depend on sense of smell for warning - H<sub>2</sub>S causes rapid deterioration of sense of smell.
- DON'T attempt fire suppression on or in close proximity to oil and gas pads. Local petroleum engineer or resource advisor may recommend safe working distances and firefighters may also be given H<sub>2</sub>S monitors when working near oil and gas pad operations.
- DON'T wait to seek medical attention if H<sub>2</sub>S exposure is suspected.

**File Code:** 5700/2670

**Date:** M;

**Route To:** (2670), (5700)

**Subject:** Retardant Avoidance Area Maps

**To:** Forest Supervisors

In July 2010 the United States District Court for the District of Montana, ruled the Forest Service's 2007 Environmental Assessment (EA) for the aerial application of fire retardant violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and that the agency's Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) violated the ESA. The Court ordered the Forest Service to fully comply with NEPA and to re-consult with USFWS and NOAA Fisheries to comply with the ESA. The Court ordered the Forest Service to issue a new decision no later than December 31, 2011. To comply with the Court's order, the Forest Service completed a programmatic EIS, in compliance with NEPA, and formally consulted with USFWS and NOAA Fisheries, in compliance with ESA. The Record of Decision (ROD) establishes agency direction for the continued use of fire retardant applied from aircraft.

The ROD requires the Forest Service to map terrestrial and aquatic avoidance areas and update the maps each year for certain federally listed threatened, endangered, and Forest Service-sensitive species as needed, so that fire retardant will not be aerially applied to those areas. GSTC prepared a national set of 7 ½ minute quadrangle maps that illustrate both the aquatic avoidance areas and buffered areas along waterways.

It was determined by multi-disciplinary personnel in the Regional Office, that the maps developed by GSTC using a hybrid of the National Hydrography Dataset and FS Topo, may be unduly restrictive for the Forests in the Southwestern Region because areas were identified as containing water when they are actually dry areas. It seemed impractical to effectively utilize fire retardant while attempting to comply with superfluous avoidance areas. Therefore, those maps have been modified to eliminate dry washes, arroyos, and other areas (intermittent and ephemeral channels) that do not contain water during the fire season. .



The new revised maps are located at: [http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/dispatch\\_logistics/aviation/avoidance\\_maps/retardant\\_avoidance\\_maps.htm](http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/dispatch_logistics/aviation/avoidance_maps/retardant_avoidance_maps.htm)

In addition to the revised water avoidance polygons, the maps contain the species avoidance areas as they were analyzed in the NEPA and ESA documents. Please review the maps to determine whether federally-listed species are still adequately protected from retardant drops based on the changes to the water avoidance area changes. This primarily applies to aquatic, semi-aquatic, or riparian species that may occur within the areas removed. Only additional areas should be added to protect sites occupied by T&E or sensitive species that were either missed during the initial mapping process, or those sites that had avoidance areas removed due to the dry washes, arroyos and other areas eliminated from the maps. If there are species polygons or areas that need to be added, make the changes to the GIS feature class located at the Enterprise Data Warehouse called S USA.Aerialfireretardantavoidance. Information regarding the revisions to the avoidance areas will be provided to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) by Regional Office staff for concurrence. The information will be reviewed by the FWS to determine if the effects determinations remain the same under the Biological Opinion issued in December 2011. Once a concurrence letter is received from the FWS, it will be transmitted to the forests.

Current shape files of the modified water and current species avoidance areas will be submitted by RO staff to the dispatch offices and downloaded into the WildCad system so that aircraft dispatchers can provide direction on avoidance areas during initial attack to local line officers, incident commanders, and incoming aviation resources. Modified species avoidance shape files for your respective units should be finalized and submitted to your local dispatch office before March 30, 2012.

Additional information and guidance regarding the ROD and the ESA Biological Opinion can be found in the enclosure *Implementation Guidance for Aerial Application of Fire Retardants on National Forest System Lands*. In addition, the WO will be providing guidance for making changes or updates to maps annually. This guidance will be released sometime in April 2012. Each forest will be responsible for making any changes to maps annually if necessary and providing updated shapefiles and finished maps to the dispatch offices in coordination and consultation (if necessary) with your local FWS Ecological Services Offices.

Questions regarding species should be directed to Bobbi Barrera at (505) 842-3191 or [blbarrera@fs.fed.us](mailto:blbarrera@fs.fed.us) . Questions regarding geospatial services should be directed to Candace Bogart at (505)842-3858 or [cbogart@fs.fed.us](mailto:cbogart@fs.fed.us). Questions regarding fire retardant operations should be directed to Kris Damsgaard at (505)842-3359 or [kdams-gaard@fs.fed.us](mailto:kdams-gaard@fs.fed.us). Also, if any of your fire suppression activities result in adverse effects to threatened or endangered species or their designated critical habitat whether covered by the National Fire Retardant BO or not, begin the emergency consultation process with your local FWS office.

/s/ Kimberly Hickman (for)

CORBIN L. NEWMAN, JR.

Regional Forester

Enclosure

**SOUTHWEST COMMUNICATION ADVANCE TEAM  
PROGRAM**

*Providing for the Safety of Firefighters on the Ground*

**Background**

Due to agency consolidation and reorganization efforts, orders for Incident Communications Technicians and Communications Unit Leaders are getting increasingly harder to fill. In the majority of the Nation it has become standard to expect that when an Incident Command Team arrives on site they will not have communications for the first 48-72 hours of the incident. Considering that 8 of the 10 Standard Fire Orders pertain directly to communication and 3 of the 18 Watchout Situations are also directly impacted by communication issues, this is a categorically unacceptable situation.

Starting in 2005, the Southwest Area began supporting and implementing the Communication Advance Team (C.A.T.) Program. At the time of this write-up the program is in its fifth year and is an unmitigated success that has proved popular with both communications personnel and the incident management teams who need them.

**How it Works**

When an IMT is ordered, the GACC prompts the order of the Radio Starter Kit (04390) and orders up, on a GACC order, 2-3 CAT members from the CAT Roster. The CAT Roster is a roster of individuals with COMT and COML (as well as trainees) qualifications from all the agencies in the SW Area who have permission to commit to the CAT Program. Since a CAT assignment only requires a 2-3 day commitment on the part of the participants, instead

of a 14 day commitment, more supervisors have allowed their personnel to participate. Generally a CAT deployment will consist of at least one qualified COMT, a COMT trainee, and if possible, an individual with a COML qualification. They are utilized to retrieve the 04390 kit for the incident from charter planes, airports, prepositions in fire caches, or simply from their delivery point to the ICP. They then assist the incoming IMT COML (if there is one) in setting up the radio equipment and the Communications Unit as well as troubleshooting communications problems. CAT members who are available and able to stay on longer than 2-3 days may remain on the GACC order (although they charge their time to the fire as directed in Special Needs on their resource order) so that they can be reassigned if needed. There have been situations when the CAT members provided the only Communications coverage on an incident for several days before replacements could be found. Even when a COML can be on site with their team in a timely fashion, the challenge of setting up a Communications Unit provides plenty of work to keep CAT members busy. In these cases, the utilization of the CAT program served an essential purpose of providing for the safety of firefighters on the ground by establishing communications for an incident within as little as 24 hours of an IMT being ordered.

Questions regarding the CAT Program can be directed to:

Kenan Jaycox, Southwest Coordination Center (505)842-3473  
Mike Hannemann, Coconino National Forest (928) 527-8262  
Paul Glazer, Grand Canyon National Park (928)638-7738

### **Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)/Peer Support**

A Critical Incident Management Program has been established for the Southwest Area under the Southwest Coordinating Group. The Southwest Area CISM Program is designed to support fire and aviation personnel with their own peers who have received specialized Peer and Group Support training. However, on a case by case basis, they may also assist in other activities such as non-fire related fatalities, accidents, or incidents. If a Fire CISM Support Group cannot be provided, the CISM Coordinator will work with the Agency Administrator to locate other CISM resources.

Once an Agency Administrator determines a need for CISM resources, contact is made to the Southwest Area CISM Coordinator at the Southwest Coordination Center :

Nancy Moore: 505-842-3473 (o) 505-238-1732 ©

Or

Kenan Jaycox : 505-842-3473 (o) 505-362-7004 ©

Specific Team Leaders have been identified within different disciplines of fire and aviation management. The CISM Coordinator will work with the Agency Administrator and Team Leader to determine the quantity and make-up of additional peer support members. Mental health professionals may or may not be needed, depending on the situation. The Southwest Coordination Center maintains contacts with specialized personnel who can assist in determining additional needs.

More information on the Southwest Area CISM Program can be found on the SWCC Website at:

[http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/management\\_admin/cism/cism.htm](http://gacc.nifc.gov/swcc/management_admin/cism/cism.htm)

## **Regional Burn Care Facilities in the Southwest Area**

### **Arizona**

Arizona Burn Center at Maricopa Medical Center  
2601 Roosevelt St  
Phoenix, AZ 85008  
**(602) 344– 5726**

### **New Mexico**

New Mexico Regional Burn Center  
Dept of Surgery ACC2  
2211 Lomas NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87131  
**(505) 272-2336**

## **Emergency Aviation Transport Sources in the Southwest**

To access the 2014 Emergency Helicopter Extraction Source List:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/aviation/av\\_library/index.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/aviation/av_library/index.html)

This list is maintained by NIFC with Southwest Fire and Aviation Management input. As errors are found, NIFC is notified. There is no guarantee these sources will be available when needed.

### **Helicopter Transport**

**Note: Basic information (if possible) needed from personnel on scene before placing order for medivac helicopter.**

Elevation of landing site

Latitude and longitude (degrees minutes, decimal minute)

Temperature

Wind speed and direction

Weight of patient

Is there a landing site, brief description of size, hazards, tall trees, uneven ground etc.

General location

Is Helitack qualified person available

## Arizona

**Arizona Department of Public Safety, State Air Rescue Service,** provides transport 24 hours a day to local hospitals for critical injuries or illness. They have one paramedic and night goggles. To request a helicopter, dispatch should contact the individual ranger unit dispatch directly:

**Flagstaff, Kingman, Phoenix and Tucson.**

Flagstaff/Kingman Ranger Unit Dispatch: (928) 773-3700

Phoenix Ranger Unit Dispatch (602) 223-2200

Tucson Ranger Unit Dispatch (520) 746-4600

**Native Air & LifeNet (1-800-642-7828)** have helicopters located in each of the below locations, each with one nurse, one paramedic, and night goggles.

**Florence, Marana, Sierra Vista, Wilcox, Safford, Gilbert, Globe, Parker, Payson, Lake Havasu City, Show Low, Casa Grande, Prescott, Kearny, Springerville, Sun City West**

**AirEvac (1-800-321-9522)** have helicopters located in each of the below locations, each with one nurse, one paramedic, and night goggles.

**Showlow, Globe, Safford, Phoenix, Mountain Vista, Buckeye, Glendale, Casa Grande and Sierra Vista**

**Guardian Air Ambulance (1-800-523-9391)** have helicopters located in each of the below locations, each with one nurse, one paramedic, and night goggles.

**Flagstaff, Cottonwood, Flagstaff, Winslow, Kingman, Tuba City**

## New Mexico

**Native Air (1-800-242-6199)** Helicopters located in each of the below locations, staffed with one nurse, one paramedic, and night goggles.



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**Deming, Las Cruces, Silver City, Roswell, Alamogordo and Hobbs**

**Aerocare (1-800-627-2376)** They have helicopters located in the location listed below All helicopters staffed with one nurse, one paramedic, and night goggles.

**Clovis**

**PHI Air Medical (1-800-633-5438)** They have helicopters located in the location listed below All helicopters staffed with one nurse, one paramedic, and night goggles.

**Albuquerque, Grants, and Socorro**

**AirEvac (1-800-321-9522)** dispatch located in Mesa, Arizona. They have helicopters located in each of the locations listed below each helicopter is staffed with one nurse, one paramedic, and night goggles.

**Albuquerque, Grants and Socorro**

**Texas**

**Aerocare (1-800-627-2376)** They have helicopters located in the locations listed below All helicopters staffed with one nurse, one paramedic, and night goggles.

**Lubbock, Seminole, Odesa and Ft. Stockton**

**Native Air (1-800-642-7828)** dispatch located in Mesa, Arizona. They have a helicopter located in the location listed below. Each helicopter is staffed with one nurse, one paramedic, and night goggles.

**El Paso, TX**

**Note:** Procedures for requesting helicopter service should be through normal dispatch channels. Services may be requested for agency employees who may be injured while on duty or private citizens who may be injured or become ill while visiting public lands.

## **Air Ambulance Service**

### **Fixed Wing Transport**

#### **Arizona**

Angel Medflight — Scottsdale, **(877) 264-3570**

Native Air — Deer Valley, Showlow, **1-800-642-7828**

AirCare1 International — Scottsdale, **(877) 760-7760**

#### **New Mexico**

Gallup Med Flight — Gallup, **(505) 863-6606**

AirCare1 International — Albuquerque, **(877) 760-7760**

Med Flight Air Ambulance — Albuquerque, El Paso, **1-800-842-4431**

Air Ambulance America — Albuquerque, **1-800-262-8526 #3**

Native Air — Carlsbad, Roswell, **1-800-242-6199**

**NOTE: Providers above provide a full service medical transportation system.**